

**VILLAGE OF GRAFTON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 7, 2026
7:00PM**

Present for roll call were Romes, Campbell, Kitts, Kilgore, and McCort. Also present were Mayor Duke, Village Administrator Andrew Lipian, and Law Director RJ Budway.

MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES

McCort makes the motion. Kilgore seconds. Vote: All AYES

MOTION TO PAY BILLS

McCort makes the motion. Kilgore seconds. Vote: All AYES

MOTION TO READ ALL ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS BY TITLE ONLY

McCort makes the motion. Kilgore seconds. Vote: All AYES

MAYOR'S UPDATE

Chief Clark, Andrew Lipien, and Mayor Duke got to be on a conference call with CSX to get the tracks fixed. We are getting our tracks fixed. A lot of their issues are getting material right now for the repair. The goal is to fix between the Memorial Day parade and the 4th of July parade. CSX said that it would probably be a week closure. There is going to be detours.

VA REPORT

There have been three clerk treasurers in the last month and a half. There have been three new councilmen seated in January and several new officers and members of staff. Mr. Lipian is pleased to say that morale on the team is strong. The village is very optimistic about where things are going.

Moving into springtime, and more information soon about Lorain County Beautification Day will be available soon. The village is going to want some volunteers for this. Dumpster Day and Shred It Day have more info soon.

Nick Baldwin got his water license so he can test our water now for the village.

OTHER VILLAGE OFFICIALS

The library has the deed for the plot of land and the village is waiting on the dollar.

POLICE

They had 673 service calls last month and 37 mutual aides.

FIRE

March 31st saw an involved car accident, just as that big storm was rolling in. Work on it took couple of hours. A commercial truck versus an SUV accident out on Route 83. The commercial truck went off the side of the road, ruptured the oil pan and the fuel tank.

The fuel tank was filled prior to the accident, resulting in a fair amount of diesel and oil on the ground, resulting in a hazmat call-out. Nine outside agencies plus the EPA involved including Sheffield Village, North Ridgeville, Sheffield Lake, Elyria, LaGrange, Avon Lake, Oberlin, Camden Township, the Health Department, and the EPA. April 6th the EPA went and verified that the cleanup efforts are complete, and they are complete.

That results in current run numbers at 133, 25 mutual aids since last report. One was given for Eaton, and one was given for LaGrange. We had two gives, the hazmat call and then an EMS call.

Another joint training in an acquired structure with LaGrange. April 13th there's a Metro Life Flight class being hosted by Grafton Township for which they are trying to get some members to go. Every month they are still meeting with University Hospitals, which is their med control, for a monthly EMS training.

To end March, two of their members went to train car emergency class out in Wakeman, covering hazard assessment, containment, along with providing direction to first responders on who to contact, when to contact, and why to contact.

Statewide burn ban runs from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. State regulates that, not local regulations. It runs until June. There are no open burns in the village either.

There are two resignations from our fire department. Fire Inspector Joe DiVincenzo, who wants to spend more time with his family. And Fire Chief Glenn Thompson resigned from the village of Grafton. Fire Chief Glenn Thompson is given his helmet.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Stephen Accord - He works as a lieutenant at North Ridgeville Fire Department and has been a full-time fireman for 12 years and served at Eaton Township Fire Department as a lieutenant for the past 15 years. He grew up in Grafton Village, have been here for 23 years, and has his nearly 70-year-old mother, 95-year-old grandmother, and a lot of lifelong friends that he cares about here, as well as the community.

He was troubled to hear there was consideration to remove daytime staffing of the fire department and going back to being a volunteer department relying on Life Care.

He wanted to offer his opinion to council that they would take into account as someone that's been doing this for a little while. Response time is everything. He states this would be taking a big step backwards.

The people of the village just expect to call 911 and have somebody be there. He claims that statistically speaking, this would give people a 0% chance of survival if they're in cardiac arrest. Any major trauma patients, depending on their injuries, would have 0% survival rate simply because Life Care is so far away. Ten minutes is about the time that is required.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

COMMSTAR CREDIT UNION UPDATE

They are trying to do is capture a kind of railroad architecture vibe and history from Grafton in the building construction. They are considering and hoping to build a public pavilion, which would be over by the trailhead, so people have a place to use it. All the drive-thrus are behind the building, so it's prettier to look at. On the inside, they are going to have an open concept. They will have a more personal kind of relationship banking.

It's going to go to construction drawings next, and that takes about 10 weeks. And then they'll be doing the permitting process and putting it out for bid. They've been trying to engage with local contractors to help with the project as much as possible. Everyone who's reached out to them, either at their office or on Facebook, will get contacted about putting bids in for whatever their piece of the construction might be.

As was discussed, they're not blocking any access to the trailhead. The Village and ODOT are working on to improve that side where that curb cut is, thinking that that might be Q127.

MAIN STREET

Their mainstream Grafton Easter egg hunt was a huge success. They welcomed over 200-plus kids and their families together in our community in Grafton's North Park. It was one of the best ones yet, and it's all thanks to the continued support of the village. A special shout-out to their president, Danelle, whose vision and dedication have helped grow this event into something truly special for Grafton families, and her leadership continues to bring meaningful memory-making events to life.

They're incredibly grateful for the support of First Tee of Cleveland, a non-profit youth program centered around golf that is a valued partner of Brentwood, who generously donated to cover the cost of hearings making bunny box lunches.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH GRAFTON (SKILLSUSA PRESENTAITON)

Magnolia and Nathan were here from Midview High School Skills USA and were here to ask for a partnership and \$10,000 towards helping our students grow as people. Magnolia has been in Skills USA for three years and has learned so much from this. Skills USA is a student-led organization run through Midview High School. It is career tech based and they get to learn about their careers after high school. They focus on work ethics, workplace skills, personal skills, and technical skills.

Two of their biggest events this year were the Craft Show fundraiser where they had over 40 community vendors come in and about 400 people. They did Lunch and Learn where they had about 50 industry partners come in from people all the way from sports networks. They had people all the way from biomedical fields and financial fields.

What they're asking for is money for competitions that Skills USA holds down in Columbus in order to take all the kids that want to go. They would like as many kids in this field to experience the opportunity. They are asking the Village of Grafton a little bit of financial support. \$10,000 to help them achieve this goal of giving as many kids the future that they deserve in this nation.

Romes makes the motion to provide \$10,000 . Kilgore seconds. Vote: All AYEs

CRA TAX ABATEMENT ESTIMATES

The village in the 90s implemented a Community Reinvestment Act, or a CRA. The CRA is very similar to tax increment financing, which is where the government can pull down the future value that will be added to the property because of the improvement that's proposed to be made. They can pull down all that future value now and invest it in the project to get infrastructure and to get critical improvements to that property. Then they pay themselves back for that loan on that increment.

They've had Kleinfelder propose a few tax analyses to the village. The CRA covers the entire area of the village but can only be used for specific things unless there's amendments made to the CRA. They'd have to give certain documents and make sure that the rules are being followed. What was asked by the council today is whether council wishes to potentially re-initiate the CRA by finding businesses that could make good use of it. This was a discussion item.

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE # 26-016 AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THAT ALL POSITIONS WITH THE GRAFTON FIRE DEPARTMENT BE DESIGNATED AS PART TIME POSITIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Romes is recognized for comment. He states the way that reads, it should read more as the acting chief should be in a part-time position and everybody else goes back to or stays at paid-on-call. The way he interprets it as it reads is everybody would just be on part-time, so they would start scheduling 20-30 hour weeks.

The mayor suggests a amendment. Romes clarifies that the way he was interpreting it, it says that everybody goes to a part-time position. That could mean 10 people with a 20-hour pay week. But the chief would be still the salary and everybody else would be a paid-on-call as it's always been.

Romes makes a motion to go into executive session. Seconded by Kilgore. Vote: All AYEs

Ordinance tabled until executive session.

ORDINANCE # 26-017 AN ORDINANCE CREATING THE TEMPORARY POSITION OF ASSISTANT CLERK-TREASURER TO PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO THE CLERK-TREASURER, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

A temporary full-time position to provide support for the clerk-treasurer, recommended for a year or earlier in contract length. Two weeks minimum of interview on interview process if approved.

McCort makes a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency. Seconded by Kilgore.

Vote on suspension of the rules: All AYES

Vote on declaring an emergency: 4 AYES, 1 NAY

Motion does not pass on emergency.

ORDINANCE # 26-018 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING A WAGE AND SALARY SCHEDULE FOR ALL VILLAGE EMPLOYEES, EXCEPT EMPLOYEES SUBJECT TO A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACT OR ACTIVE NEGOTIATIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

This is housekeeping and it is done every year. It's in line with past union negotiations, personnel summary sheets, and actions that have generally already been reviewed by Council in the past. It's just codifying it for the new year.

Motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency made by McCort. Seconded by Kilgore.

Vote on suspension of the rules: All AYES

Vote on declaring an emergency: All AYES

Vote to pass: All AYES

RESOLUTIONS

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN A RAILROAD CROSSING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT WITH CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC., AND AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF THE VILLAGE'S SHARE OF COSTS.

Romes makes the motion. McCort seconds. Vote: All AYES

MOTIONS

MOTION TO ANNOUNCE AND AWARD UTILITY CREDITS OF \$50.00 TO THREE SPECIALLY SELECTED GRAFTON VILLAGE RESIDENTS FOR RESTAURANT WEEK.

There is a \$50 Village of Grafton utility credit for each one of these. Barb White, Taylor Long, and Kirk Brown.

Romes makes the motion. McCort seconds. Vote: All AYEs

MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2026 SEVEN-WEEK SEASON FOR "EMPOWER SPORTS" BEGINNING JULY 14, 2026, WITH WEEKLY USE OF A DESIGNATED BALL FIELD AT NORTH PARK FOR ONE HOUR AND FIFTEEN MINUTES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

McCort makes the motion. Kilgore seconds. Vote: All AYEs

MOTION TO APPROVE A QUOTE FROM RMH CONCRETE AND FOUNDATIONS, INC. FOR CATCH BASIN RECONSTRUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,484.20 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency made by McCort. Seconded by Campbell.

Vote on suspension of the rules: All AYEs

Vote on declaring an emergency: All AYEs

Vote to pass: All AYEs

MISCELLANEOUS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Rose

He was told that there was a complaint about a truck that was parked on his lot on Barger 800 Barger is commercial directly across from 1080. He heard there was a complaint about a truck driver that was inappropriate to a resident that was walking by. He just wanted to apologize for it and hope that it doesn't happen again, but he needs to know if it does happen. He contacted the company that he uses for these bookings, and they have a zero-tolerance policy.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

GRAFTON VILLAGE COUNCIL MAY RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, DISMISSAL, DISCIPLINE, PROMOTION, DEMOTION, OR COMPENSATION OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE OR OFFICIAL, ALONG WITH ANY OTHER MATTERS AS SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED BY MOTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORC 121.22(G)(1-8). UNLESS EXPRESSLY STATED OTHERWISE DURING EXECUTIVE SESSION, MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION ARE DESIGNATED BY THE VILLAGE COUNCIL AS CONFIDENTIAL. BECAUSE THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF SUCH MATTERS IS NECESSARY FOR THE PROPER CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, ANY DISCLOSURE OUTSIDE OF EXECUTIVE SESSION IS PROHIBITED BY ORC 102.03(B). WHILE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION, VILLAGE COUNCIL MAY DISCUSS AND DELIBERATE ON THE MATTERS AT ISSUE, BUT NO VOTES MAY BE TAKEN UNTIL OPEN SESSION RESUMES.

McCort makes the motion. Kilgore seconds. Vote: All AYEs

ORDINANCES CONT.

*ORDINANCE # 26-016 AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THAT ALL POSITIONS WITH THE
GRAFTON FIRE DEPARTMENT BE DESIGNATED AS PART TIME POSITIONS AND
DECLARING AN EMERGENCY*

Romes makes the motion to amend the motion.

A resident questions if this ss this being voted on to put in place that night. It is clarified to be April 18th and will not be read again to the public in its amended form; it will go into effect. The law director states when he was asked to draft this motion, he was told we wanted to make this effective April 1st, and they wanted to eliminate the full-time positions in the fire department. He feels that's in the best interest of the ability to practice to do that.

The terminology of an emergency is restated as a procedural protocol. It means that it won't wait for certain dates or 30 days for it to take effect, it will take effect immediately. A step down from emergency would be suspension of rules, which means it doesn't go through readings. And then passage, which is yay or nay, pass or not. So they were not having three readings to the public, per council's decision.

The resident requests to speak and is given three minutes.

The resident says they've been on the Grafton Village Fire Department for 20-some years and that if council is voting to put them back to a volunteer status, that is a step backwards for the fire department and for the members of this community.

He states he hopes that they are basing this on fact and looking at what is best for the people of this community and the effectiveness of our department and that many of the former volunteer departments in the area are manned stations (Eaton Township, LaGrange, Carlisle Township, Columbia). He states one thing that has worked so well is that Chief Thompson has worked to improve the morale of the department, but that he hasn't seen him improve the effectiveness of the department.

The end of the three minutes arrives and a motion to give him one more minute is made by Romes, seconded by McCort. Vote: All AYEs

The resident concludes by saying people are expecting and planning on this for their money because as a part-time, they have about eight or nine people working part-time, and it is what is best for this community. He asks council please do not go back to where they were 20 years ago and earlier and go backwards for this community, backwards for the department, and put the people in this community in danger for whether it's a fire call, some sort of emergency, or especially most of which we don't require medical calls.

Motion to suspend the rules made by Romes. Seconded by McCort. Vote on suspension of the rules: All AYES

Romes interjects to ask the resident where the number for 8-9 part-time employees is from as there is a full-time chief but no part-time employees. While the resident states these were approved via previous meetings in an unknown time, council states that this ruling was not found in minutes.

Motion to declare an emergency made by Romes. Seconded by McCort. Vote on declaring an emergency: All AYES

Motion to pass made by Romes. Seconded by McCort. Vote to pass: All AYES

APPROVAL OF THE PERSONNEL SUMMARY SHEET

Motion to pass made by McCort. Seconded by Kilgore. Vote to pass: All AYES

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Kilgore. Seconded by Campbell. Vote to pass: All AYES